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## Kollam (Quilon): The God's own City

**K**ollam - the most picturesque city that holds pristine beaches with golden sands, exquisite monuments and temples speaking volumes of a bygone era, breathtaking eco-spots like Thenmala and Palaruvi, splendour of the Ashtamudi lake attracting some of the rare breed of exotic birds, houseboats and the tempting taste of cashew nuts. Perhaps no other destination can offer it all like Kollam. If Kerala is God's Own Country, then Kollam or Quilon is God's Own City. Kollam (Quilon) is famous for its cashew, coir, marine products and spices.

Kollam is a coastal town in south Kerala with the Arabian Sea to its west and western ghats to its far east and spreads on the banks of the beautiful Ashtamudi backwaters. A long shoreline with beaches, monuments, backwater stretches, the Palaruvi waterfalls, Ambanad hill station, Thenmala Eco-Tourism Centre and pilgrim

centres like Matha Amrithanandamayi's Asramom, Sabarimala Ayyappa Temple and Oachira Temple and a rich cultural heritage make Kollam a must-see destination on the itinerary of tourists arriving in God's Own Country. The port town of Kollam is also known as the southern gateway to Kerala's backwaters.

### The Quilon Beach Hotel Kollam

The first classified five-star luxury hotel in the Cashew City, The Quilon Beach Hotel, situated in the heart of Kollam city, showcases the ancient grandeur and warmth of the erstwhile Deshingnanadu province. The much acclaimed eastern hospitality of this land, hailed by many ancient renowned travellers like Marco Polo, Fahein and Ibn Batuta, is once again in the vicinity of the travelling community.

This business cum leisure hotel is ideally located on the



serene beach at Kollam with the Arabian Sea on one side, M.G. Park and the main city on the other and the national waterway right in front of the hotel offering entry to the internationally renowned Kerala backwaters with seven wonderful views which includes the sea, beach, park, city, greenery, port and backwaters. It is only 65 km from the Thiruvananthapuram International Airport, and is

easily accessible by road, rail, sea and backwaters from other important towns of Kerala.

Some of the facilities here include all 95 sea facing rooms with multi-cuisine restaurant, coffee shop, a rooftop pool, an infinity swimming pool, international spa and Kerala Ayurvedic centre, Health and Beauty salons. The hotel is designed offer international standard amenities and

services to both leisure and business travellers alike. The concept of MICE tourism is incorporated with a full size international convention centre that can accommodate up to 1,500 pax, one of the biggest beachside business facilities in India. The other seven conference halls of different capacities provide variety to conferencing and make it a pleasant and peaceful location for conducting business meetings.

The hotel offers sightseeing arrangements to pilgrims visiting Matha Amrithanantha Mai Asramom and Sabarimala Temple. Houseboat cruises on the Ashtamudi lake, Thenmala Eco-Tourism Centre, Palaruvi waterfalls, Ambanad hill station, Paravoor, Konni Elephant rides, Thirumullavaram, Kovalam, Varkala Beaches are some of the nearby attractions.

The Sparsh Ayurvedic Centre at the Quilon Beach Hotel has ten sea facing

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treatment rooms and will provide different treatments for body and beauty care. Sparsh has a team of eminent doctors providing ayurvedic solutions using herbal ingredients to ameliorate modern day ailments caused by lifestyle iniquities. The treatment plan is customised to individual requirements and needs. One remarkable fact about these treatments is that they are directed towards fortifying the immunity system and therefore precluding the chance of disease. Most of the treatments such as njavarakkizhi, pizhichil, dhara, shirovashthi, k a t i v a s t h i , Ksheeradhoomam, thalam and lepanam ranging from Euro 10 to 50 for one time treatment are done for short term and long term of 14 to 28 days where the cost is between Euro 1000 to 2000. Udhavarthanam is a treatment for hemiplegic paralysis, obesity and certain types of rheumatic ailments. There is a slimming programme for 28 days costing Euro 2000. Under the 10 day beauty care programme there is a

package costing Euro 1000, for improving complexion, skin tone and body figure.

### Destinations in an around Kollam

**Ashtamudi Lake:** Certainly the top most tourist attraction at Kollam is the placid Ashtamudi Lake. A waterscape, extending into 8 branches and occupying a large area of Kollam. The natural beauty of Ashtamudi and the houseboats cruising along it attracts large number of international and domestic tourists.

**Kollam Beach:** A serene beach, scores of people visit the beach for relaxation and entertainment.

**Thangassery:** An erstwhile Portuguese Colony where the remnants of the old Portuguese Fort and a British built lighthouse and Buckingham Canal can be visited.

**Thirumuklavaram Beach:** A shallow water beach located to the north of Kollam town ideal for swimming and bathing in the sea.

**Munroe island:** An island formed at the confluence where the Kallada

river empties herself into the Ashtamudi. The island in crisscrossed by a network of shallow canals. The famous Kallada Jalostavam is conducted here annually.

**Thenmala Eco -Tourism Centre:** The first eco-tourism centre to come up in the whole of India. Is an ideal place to watch wildlife and forests.

**Palaruvi Waterfalls:** A 300 ft high waterfall amidst thick tropical forests. Crystal clean water rushing down over the rocks forming thick white forth is a wonderful sight.

**Ambanad Hill Station:** A tranquil, pleasant hill station at an altitude about 1000 MSL with year round moderate climate, nestled at top of the breathtakingly beautiful tea gardens along the slopes of the Western Ghats.

**Achancoil:** A thickly wooded place where there is a temple dedicated to Lord Sastha. The place is visited by tourists all year round and by pilgrims in large numbers during festival season.

**Jadayupara:** A large rock formation. It is believed that the epic bird Jadayu had

fallen here when its one wing was severed by demon Ravana.

**Kottukal Cave Temple:** A rock-cut cave temple near Jadayupara.

**Paravoor:** A verdant country where the facility for elephant ride is available with a local tourist entrepreneur. The Paravoor estuary is an added attraction.

**M a t h a A m r i t a n a d a m a y i Asramom:** World renowned Asramom of Matha Amritanandamayi Devi at Vallickavu the birth place of Amma, is only a few kilometres to the north of Kollam town. The Asramom can be easily both by road and inland waterway.

**Sabarimala Lord Ayyappa Temple:** Located deep inside tropical forest is one among the most popular temples of south India. Pilgrims from different parts of the country visit Sabarimala Lord Ayyappa Temple during festival season.

**Oachira:** A popular pilgrim centre with an ancient Para Brahmana Temple, one of the rarest of

its kind in the whole of south India is only about 35 km from Kollam town.

**Konni:** The elephant camp at Konni offers excellent opportunity for thrilling elephant rides.

**Varkala:** A serenely beautiful destination and pilgrimage centre, Varkala is only a 30 km from Kollam.

As the seaside destination offers more privacy to tan-seekers, Varkala has over the years emerged as an alternative destination to Kovalam and attracts repeat tourist in large numbers.

The calm and secluded Papanasham beach, loved by many tourists, has a red laterite cliff running along its entire stretch. The red cliff top offers tourists a spectacular view of the sunset. The adjacent Thiruvambady Beach (black sand beach) is a favourite of those looking for solitude. The Kappil beach, 8 km north of Varkala, is the confluence of the sea, a river and a backwater. The Priyadharshini Boat Club of the District Tourist Promotion Council offers boating facilities at Kappil. ■